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'A Tragic Loss': Miami Marlins Pitcher Jose Fernandez Killed in Boating Accident

Fernandez posted a photo of his girlfriend sporting a "baby bump" on his Instagram page last week, announcing that the couple was expecting its first child



The Miami Marlins organization gathered Sunday to address the tragic death of 24-year-old pitcher Jose Fernandez. (Published 6 hours ago)

Jose Fernandez, the ace right-hander for the Miami Marlins who escaped Cuba to become one of baseball's brightest stars, was killed in a boating accident early Sunday morning. Fernandez was 24.

Authorities said Fernandez was one of three people killed in a boat crash off Miami Beach.



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WEATHER FORECAST





David P. Samson, center, president of the Miami Marlins, covers his face during press conference to announce the death of Marlins pitcher Jose Fernandez. Fernandez, the ace right-hander for the Miami Marlins who escaped Cuba to become one of baseball's brightest stars, was killed in a boating accident early Sunday morning. Fernandez was 24.

Photo credit: AP

Officer Lorenzo Veloz with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission said that a Coast Guard patrol boat spotted an overturned boat at 3:30 a.m. on a jetty near Government Cut. Authorities say they don't know the time of the accident.

FWC officials responded to the scene and divers found three bodies — two under the 32-foot Sea-Vee and one on the jetty.

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Mike Stobe/Getty Images

All three victims were pronounced dead at the scene, Veloz said at a Sunday morning news conference. The names of the other two individuals are being withheld pending notification of relatives, the Coast Guard said.

"This was a great loss," Veloz said. "A tragic loss for fans, the Marlins, the City of Miami, the state of Florida, baseball, and for anyone who met Jose."

In Memoriam: Jose Fernandez

Getty Images

According to Veloz, speed appeared to be a factor in the crash, noting the "severity of the impact on the jetty and the debris around the scene."

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"It does appear to be that they were coming at full speed when they encountered the jetty, and the accident happened," Veloz said.

Marlins Pitcher Jose Fernandez's Career in Photos

Getty Images

The capsized boat has not yet been turned upright, "but of what we saw, the top of the boat – which is still under water – appears to be severely damaged," Veloz said, adding that the vessel is a "total loss. It's bad, it's horrible, it's bad."

Officials also said Fernandez and the two other victims were not wearing life vests at the time of the crash. Veloz said the boat belongs a friend of Hernandez's who is very well connected to several Marlins players, but did not identify the owner. "We have stopped that boat before over safety concerns with other Marlins players on board," he added.

Veloz said there was no immediate indication that alcohol or drugs were a cause in the crash.

In the statement, the Marlins say they are "devastated by the tragic loss of José Fernández. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this very difficult time."

Because the boat was on a jetty, the Coast Guard notified Miami-Dade police, which turned the investigation over to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

"We are stunned and devastated," Major League Baseball said in a statement.



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We are stunned and devastated by the tragic news that Jose Fernandez, 24, has died in a boating accident.

atmlb.com/2d9O0a1

6:53 AM - 25 Sep 2016

43,870

37,863

City of Miami Fire-Rescue workers were seen carrying bodies, draped and on stretchers, at the Coast Guard station after sunrise Sunday.

Fernandez was a two-time All-Star who went 38-17 in his four seasons with the Marlins, winning the NL's Rookie of the Year award in 2013. The native of Santa Clara, Cuba became a U.S. citizen last year and was enormously popular in Miami.

He tried to defect from Cuba at least three times — landing in jail after one of those unsuccessful tries — before eventually getting to the U.S. and going to high school in Tampa, Florida. The Marlins drafted him in 2011 and Fernandez was in the majors two years later.

The Marlins' game Sunday at home against the Atlanta Braves was cancelled.

Video boards at Marlins Park on Sunday morning showed a large "16" — Fernandez's uniform number — over his name. The number was also painted on the mound, and flowers rested on the rubber. A few dozen fans milled about in the ballpark plaza, some wearing Fernandez jerseys.

Fernandez posted a photo of his girlfriend sporting a "baby bump" on his Instagram page last week, announcing that the couple was expecting its first child.

"I'm so glad you came into my life," Fernandez wrote in that post. "I'm ready for where this journey is gonna take us together."



37.9k likes 9,485 comments

"I'm still in shock," former Marlins player Gaby Sanchez said on Twitter. "The world has lost a remarkable person. You will be missed and my heart goes out to the Fernandez family."



Published 5 hours ago

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